

Short and Snappy - Take Action vs. Community Service



Objective

To provide a better understanding of what Take Action project are, and to provide some ideas for carrying them out.

Length

20 minutes

Materials Needed

Attached visual handout (iceberg)

Information to Share (spend 10 minutes on this section)

Community Service projects are meant to fill an immediate need in a community, but are short term projects only. They are one-time events that have a short term impact. Examples of community service projects are collecting and donating needed items (e.g. a food drive for the food bank, or a clothing drive in the winter for a homeless shelter). Community Service is a wonderful thing for girls to do, but girls also need to Take Action, in order to sustainably make the world a better place.

A Take Action Project is about addressing the root cause of an issue to make a sustainable impact. Take Action projects are identified, planned, and implemented WITH the community not just FOR the community.

A Root Cause is the underlying reason for a symptom, problem, or issue. It's the event that initiates a problem or issue. Look at the Iceberg example (attached). For every problem you see in the community, there are underlying issues that are causing that problem. Take Action is all about working with communities to understand those underlying root causes, and tackling those, rather than making short-term fixes at the surface level. That is what makes Take Action sustainable.

Girls must make sure that the project is visible within the community, the impact is measurable, and that the project is sustainable.

- ❖ Visible: a project that not only can be seen by members of the community, but involves members of the community
- ❖ Measurable: The success of the project can be determined by the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any measurable reduction in the community's need, and other concrete, quantitative numbers.
- ❖ Sustainable: Girls make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations or building alliances with mentors) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not just a one-time event.

EXAMPLE:

Surface-level (visible) community issue: There are hungry people in the community

Community Service response: do a food drive and donate to struggling families

Take Action response:

- Talk to families and community members about root causes for growing hunger in the area (loss of job, single-income households, difficult to find employment due to lack of interview skills, etc.).
- Through collaborating with the affected families, come up with realistic solutions to the root causes (interview skills classes, newsletter with job postings, resume-writing classes, etc.)
- Make it measurable and sustainable – after you provide the initial knowledge and supplies, who will carry on the newsletters and interview classes? Who will follow up with the families on their job retention? Measure how many people who took the classes and read the newsletters actually found and maintained jobs? Can they now afford better food for their families?

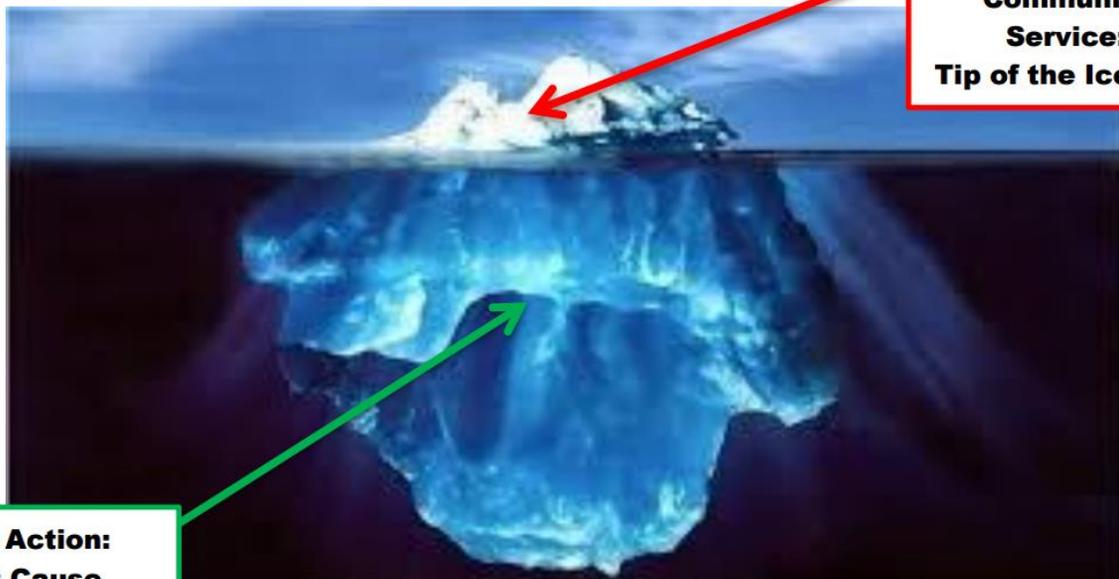
Activity (spend 10 minutes on this section)

1. Divide participants into teams.
2. Distribute the paper and pencils and ask each team to list several problems. Have them develop a short-term project (community service) and a Take Action project (that would address the root problem) for the problems they pick.
3. After the teams are finished, ask one person from each team to explain how they came up with their solutions.
4. End the activity with a general discussion of Take Action projects and ask for examples of Take Action projects from leaders. Explain that there is progression in Take Action projects from Daisy to Ambassador Levels.

Some things to consider before picking a project:

- How much time will this take?
- What are your resources available to you?
- What community structures will allow this to be sustainable?
- What is the goal of the troop?
- What is the setting for this project?

The root cause of an issue is everything beneath the surface. It takes in-depth observation, questioning, and awareness. The root cause is the “why” of every issue. Community Service is easily visible to the eye—the Take Action Projects address the root causes, which are often hidden, but affect a much larger group and make a much bigger impact.



**Community Service:
Tip of the Iceberg**

**Take Action:
Root Cause**